

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

4 January 1983

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM : Major General Edward B. Atkeson, USA
National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces

SUBJECT : New Soviet Tank Deployments

1. I believe that the long awaited T-80 tank has been deployed in some strength in Soviet units in Eastern Europe. While confirmation (or refutation) must await conclusive proof, in my view the evidence on hand is sufficient for all but a court of law.

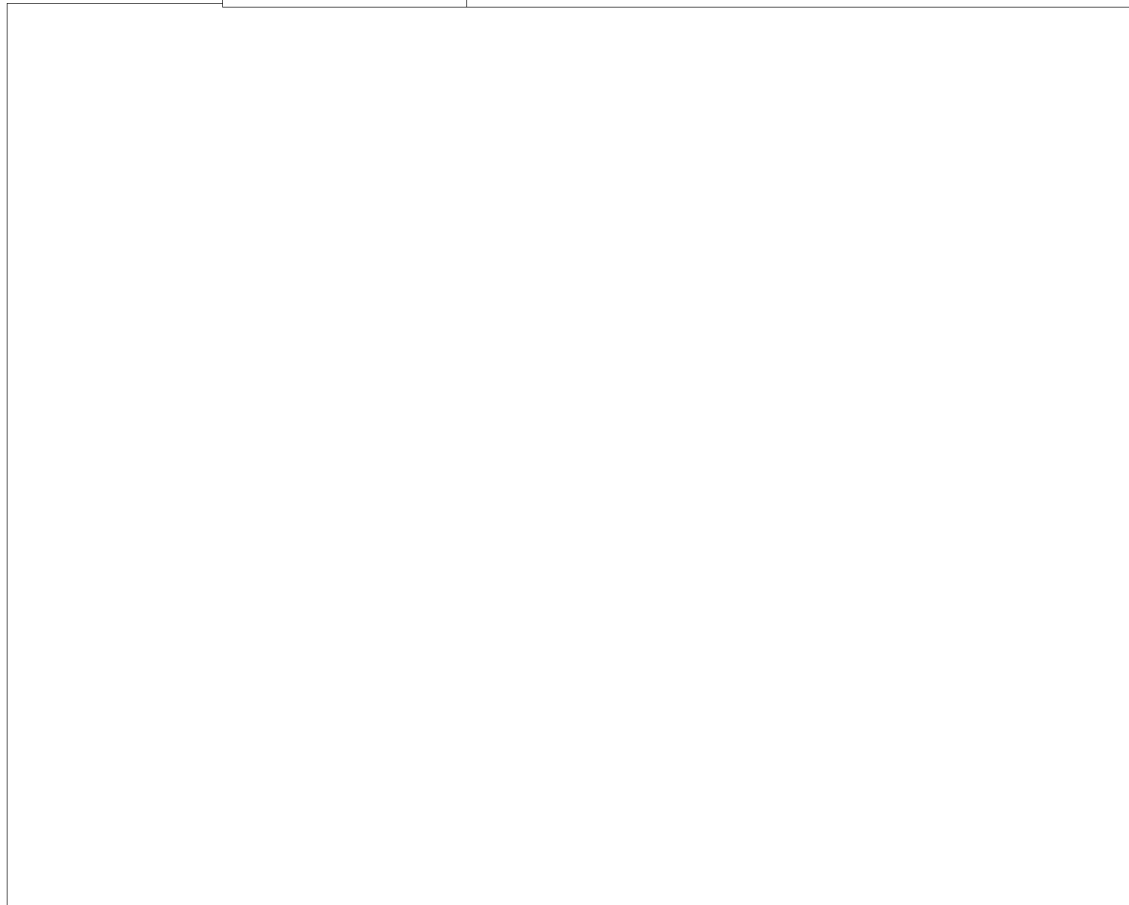
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2. The principal evidence is as follows:

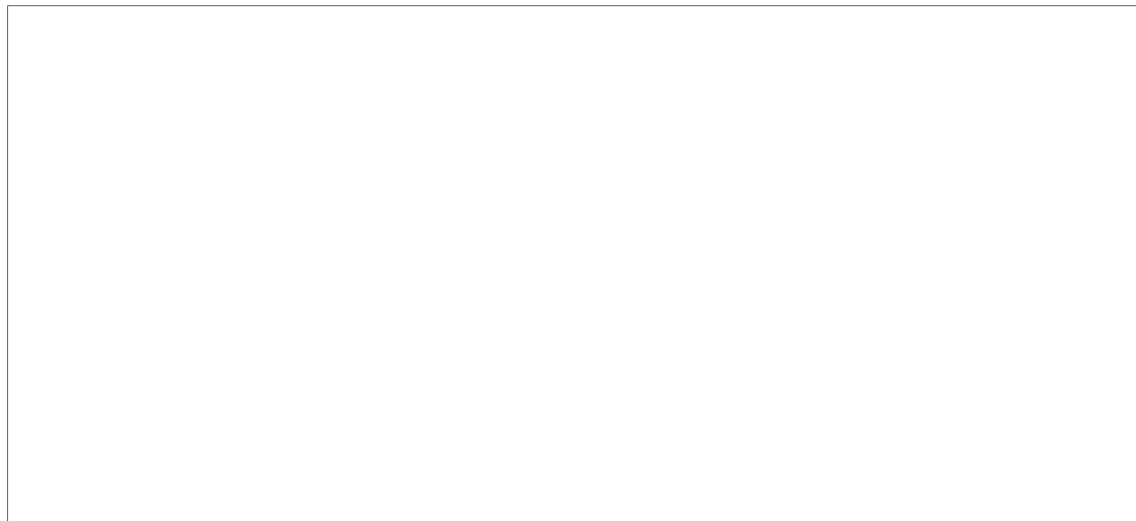
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3. The key question is whether the "M1981/3" is in fact the T-80 instead of a T-72 variant. I believe it is the T-80 for four reasons:

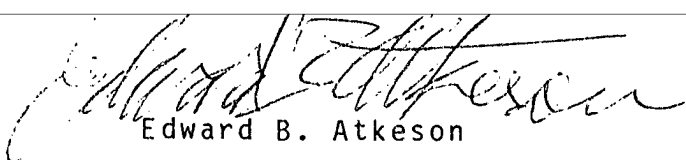


-- We have not seen any other unidentified tank in East Germany which could be the T-80, nor do we have data [redacted] that would indicate that the "M1981/3" is anything other than the T-80.

- If T-80 were an entirely new tank, it seems unlikely that the Soviets would extensively field a modified T-72 in an area where T-72's have never been deployed. A decade ago they did deploy two different tanks, the T-64 and the T-72, at essentially the same time, but not with the same forces. The T-64's went to forces in the USSR and the Groups of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG) while the T-72's were retained in the Soviet Union.
- There is some evidence that the Soviets are planning to field an improved T-80 with a considerably higher effectiveness by the mid 1980's.

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4. Assuming my conclusion is correct, it now remains to obtain a count of the T-80 deployments and an estimate of the rates of production and infusion of the vehicles into the forces. OIA, OSWR, and SOVA are working on these questions now. All of these issues will be addressed in our IIM on Soviet armor

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